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1. The Intel Visual Ranking tool forces students to think critically. It also forces them to assign value judgments to specific topics. This can be done as an individual or as part of a collaborative group project. Students can also use Visual Ranking to answer questions in a specific order or on a specific timeline. Or it can be used for students to compare and contrast information. The main idea is for students to evaluate the relative significance of ideas or events by criteria that they establish in order to go beyond simple rote memorization. Succinct summary

2. The first key step to setting up the Visual Ranking tool is to set up a project in the teacher workspace. Then the teacher can create a list of terms to be ranked, or can have the students select the terms to be ranked. Students can then choose where to rank items in the list either individually or in groups. Students can then view how their list compares to another group’s list or to the class average. The teacher can review student work from the teacher work station and can even make comments on a group’s work. Results can be printed out for further use.

3. The Visual Ranking tool could be very useful in my own subject area which is High School Social Studies. For example, if teaching a course on American government, one could use the timely example of the debate over raising the debt ceiling. Groups could assign value judgments to a list of ways to reduce the deficit and prioritize which items were the most important. A list could include items like Education, Social Security, Medicare, Tax deductions for oil companies, Farm subsidies, etc. This would be a great way to get students to think about the very real decisions that government makes and why it is important to participate in a democracy to ensure that their own priorities are heard. Some years ago one of the social studies student teachers did this with the Oregon budget; she didn’t use Visual Ranking but she did challenge her Economics Honors class to craft an Oregon budget and then present it to local Oregon legislators. She got hired the next year. +5